

# Literacy Development

***When a child creates with blocks, when he communicates with paint, when he uses his body freely as a means of expression, he is being taught to read.***

(J. Hymes, 1965)





# *Literacy Development Training Outline*

## **Part 1:**

- a. Defining literacy**
- b. Literacy development**

## **Part 2:**

- a. Supporting literacy in the environment, and**
- b. through interactions**

## **Part 3:**

- a. Alphabet learning**
- b. English Language Learners**
- c. Professional Development**
- d. Resources**

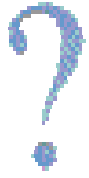
# Part 1 (a): What is "Literacy?"

Literacy is communication in all forms;

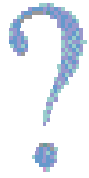
- ⌘ listening
- ⌘ speaking/signing
- ⌘ reading
- ⌘ writing



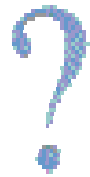
Literacy is continually evolving, beginning at birth, through interactions with others and the environment in which a child lives. While the *sequence* of literacy development follows the same general pattern, individual *rates* of growth may vary.



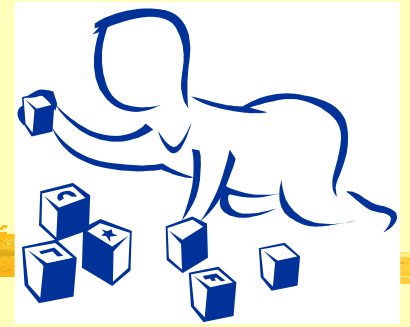
# What's the Big Deal?



- ☞ The process of literacy development begins before elementary school
- ☞ A child's very early experiences set the stage for the development of literacy.
- ☞ Learning to read and write is critical to a child's success in school and later in life. It is the foundation for almost all areas of a child's development.
- ☞ Reading and writing are interrelated and develop concurrently.
- ☞ Isolated skill instruction is rarely developmentally appropriate. Literacy develops in everyday activities.



# Part 1 (b): Literacy Development



## Age 0-2

*Oral language is the foundation for a child's entry into literacy.*

- Cries and uses gestures, facial expressions, vocalizations, and body movements to communicate.
- Vocalize by cooing (3 months) and babbling (6 months)
- Experiments with language by making sounds that imitate the tones and rhythms of adult speech.
- Infant's messages are not always clear, particularly if experiencing stress or if the child has special needs. It is a time of learning for adult and infant.

# Literacy Development



## Age 0-2

- Adult's response to infant's communication impacts the infant's response and behavior.
- Respond to cues (waves: bye-bye)
- Build language understanding before words/signs (receptive language) are used to express themselves (expressive language).
- Use one-word sentences (by 18 months) and two-word sentences (between 18-24 months)
- Show interest in books that feature familiar objects and begin to name these objects out loud (between 18-24 months)
- Participate in making the sounds of animals they see in books.

# Literacy Development

## Age 0-2

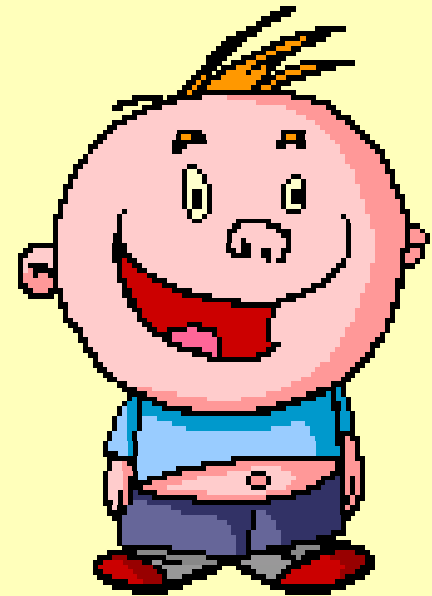
- ☞ Enjoys listening to stories, rhymes, and songs, participating in finger-plays, looking at books.
- ☞ Understand that his/her written name signifies something special that pertains specifically to him/her.
- ☞ Vocalizes less while learning to walk.
- ☞ Scribbles enthusiastically.
- ☞ A 2 year old child has a vocabulary of about 50 words.



# Literacy Development

## Age 2-3:

- Generalizes: apple is a ball, all
- four-legged animals are dogs
- Uses *me* and *mine*
- Uses *no*
- Enjoys imitating and mimicking nursery rhymes
- Increase in communication, conversation, and interest in language
- Increased vocabulary





# Literacy Development



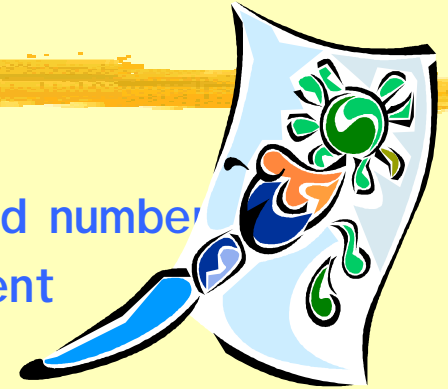
## Age 3-5

- ☞ Pretends to read, using visual cues to remember the words of his/her favorite stories
- ☞ Realizes that reading moves left to right, top to bottom
- ☞ Learns that print, rather than pictures, carries the meaning of the story
- ☞ Begins to make sense of information and ask questions.
- ☞ Understands that writing is used to convey messages and has a specific form and symbol system.
- ☞ Recognizes and names letters
- ☞ Writes some letters

# Literacy Development

## Age 3-5

- ☞ Enjoys playing games involving written words and numbers
- ☞ Recognizes examples of print in their environment
- ☞ Knows that writing is a form of communication
- ☞ Communicates needs and questions
- ☞ Uses 3-4 word sentences (beginning at ages 3-4). Uses 4-8 word sentences by age 5.
- ☞ Begins to understand *beside* and *under*
- ☞ Uses "private speech" to problem-solve, think out loud, and control own behavior.
- ☞ Giggles over nonsense words, uses silly and profane language to shock.



# Literacy Development

## Age 3-5

- ☞ Oral language development helps build social skills and attach name objects and activities.
- ☞ Enjoys dictating comments about artwork and letters
- ☞ Tells longer stories
- ☞ Begins to engage in inquiry, reflection, argument, description, and explanation.
- ☞ Between 3-5 years, children learn an average of 50 new words per month.  
Vocabulary of 400-900 words by age 4.



# Literacy Development

Age 5-8



- ☞ Enjoys writing and giving written messages to others, using invented and standard spelling.
- ☞ Begins to write words that he/she hears and learns to leave spaces between words
- ☞ Enjoys reading and browsing through favorite books, simple predictable books, and books he/she has written
- ☞ Seeks clarification, explore ideas, and develop understanding.

# Literacy Development

## Ages 5-8

- ☞ Social skills improve; use of language in social settings is more appropriate.
- ☞ By 7 or 8, a child will ask for clarification of information that is unclear to him/her.
- ☞ Eager to learn the answers to “why” questions.
- ☞ Mastery of grammar and pronunciation improves.



# Literacy Development

## Ages 5-8

- ☞ May have difficulty decoding sentences.
- ☞ Recognizes and identifies some of the sounds that letters represent and begins to sound out some words.
- ☞ Begins to understand language is governed by a set of rules.
- ☞ Vocabulary continues to increase:
  - 📖 at age 6 = 8,000-14,000 words
  - 📖 between 9 & 11 years = 13,000-19,000 words



# Any Ideas?

## How can you support literacy development?

- What could you add to the environment?
- How can you support literacy development through interactions?
- What can families do to support literacy?

*By supporting literacy through your awareness and behavior, you have a powerful influence on the life of a child.*



# Part 2: Supporting Literacy

## a) Materials and Activities

## b) Interactions: Provider and family members





# Materials & Activities

## ~Infants through Age 2~



- Color and Visuals at eye level
- Books, activity boxes, and grasping toys
- Nesting & stacking materials and fill and empty containers
- Variety of balls, bells, rattles, feathers, soft washable dolls...
- Measuring spoons and cups, non-breakable bowls, cardboard boxes.
- Labels and objects with print and pictures
- Active, large muscle play is available indoors and out
- Daily walks outside (weather permitting - for infants)

# Materials & Activities

## ~All children~



- Provide appropriate art materials that encourage exploration and manipulation of materials (be aware of children “mouthing” items).
- Daily explorations include; water or sand play, painting, and playing with clay or play dough (older infants and older-based on development)
- Artwork and other creative projects are hung just above reach, but low enough for tots to see. Hang at eye-level for older children.
- Interest areas for small group play, being along, dramatic play and construction are available. Low dividers are used.
- Sturdy books are available representing different races, ages, cultural groups, family types, and abilities/disabilities.

# Materials & Activities Ideas ~Preschool through School-Age~

## ART & MUSIC

- Have signs and pictures that show where things are kept
- Ask children to describe materials they use and the teacher can write descriptions down and post on the wall for all to see.
- Offer a variety of art forms, techniques, and materials - always ready for use.
- Invite visitors
- Display artwork and books related to art/music
- Offer a variety of instruments, materials to make instruments, patterns, play a variety of music.
- Introduce appropriate songs with accompanying movements.

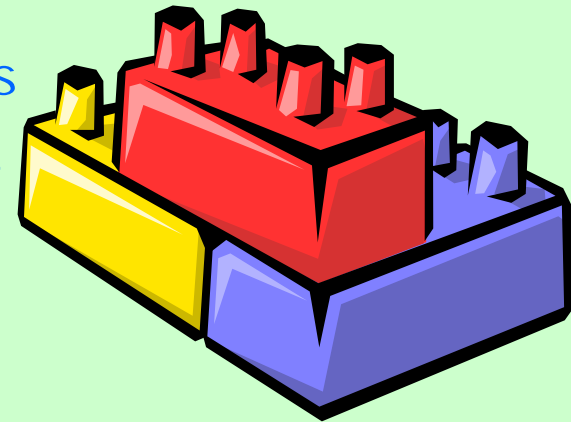


# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~

### BLOCKS

- ❑ Label block shelves with shapes and words (classification)
- ❑ Ask children to give each other directions for where blocks go and what they are used for.
- ❑ Provide drawing materials to sketch structures and an adult can write their word descriptions.
- ❑ Provide architectural magazines, and other written materials and drawings on buildings and construction.
- ❑ Block play enhances literacy development=practice with symbolic representation (blocks become whatever the child likes)



# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~

### COOKING

- ☐ Label cooking equipment, shelves, furniture.
- ☐ Describe actions (pour, measure, stir)
- ☐ Use recipe cards with both pictures and words. Encourage children to use action and expressive words.
- ☐ Provide and make cookbooks.
- ☐ Provide cooking magazines
- ☐ Provide "recipes" for children to follow with non-food materials.



# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~

### DISCOVERY/SCIENCE

- Label all materials and encourage “writing” and “reading” about items in science area.
- Add resource books, children’s books, and other reference materials for use.
- Ask questions about what is displayed
- Encourage children’s displays with their dictated words nearby
- Graph growth and changes of plants, animals, children, and experiments.
- Offer many writing materials.
- Add items that interest the children and change items as needed. Ask children to bring items in to share.



# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~

### **LANGUAGE/WRITING**

**(specific area & throughout the center)**

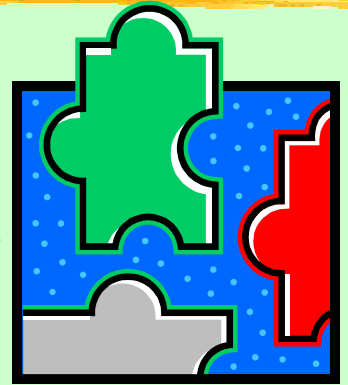
- ◆ Label the bookshelf, tape recorder, other equipment, and
- ◆ areas throughout the room. Provide name tags on cubby area etc.
- ◆ Help children make their own books that involve description, narration (it is winter when...), and recall (Yesterday, I ...)
- ◆ Encourage children to “write” notes, lists, or letters to one another, the teachers, their families.
- ◆ Provide writing materials and print in different forms; phone books, coupons, magazines, resource books etc.
- ◆ Provide materials representing diversity.
- ◆ Develop a writing center with a typewriter, office supplies, and so on.
- ◆ Provide a listening center with corresponding easy-to-read books.
- ◆ Provide language experiences: nursery rhymes, fairy tales, visually appealing stories, imaginative picture books, puppetry, finger plays, familiar songs, beginning drama, storytelling, poetic verse, flannel stories...

# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~

### MANIPULATIVES

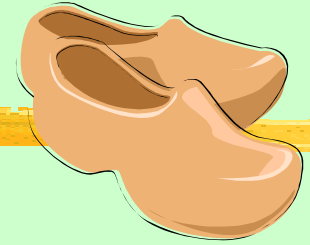
- ☀ Recognize this area as a place for self-communication, as children talk and sing to themselves while they work.
- ☀ Ask about and explain similarities and differences of materials and structures.
- ☀ Provide writing materials so children can “write” about or draw their creations as children learn about quantity, shape, size, patterns, and color.
- ☀ Provide magazines related to this area; Lego, etc.
- ☀ Children practice visual discrimination, eye-hand coordination, and fine-muscle control which are helpful in reading.





# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~



### DRAMATIC PLAY

*change the theme of the center as interests change*

- ☀ Books to read to dolls or stuffed animals.
- ☀ Cookbooks by the play stove and other written materials related to the area: phone books, lists, magazines, receipts, coupons, menus...
- ☀ Writing materials for making lists, notes, writing down phone numbers, stationary, envelopes, copies stamps, etc.
- ☀ Empty food, toiletry, and cleaning containers.
- ☀ Emergency Phone number decals.
- ☀ Magazines and newspapers
- ☀ Play money and grocer store food ads
- ☀ Children enter a fantasy world similar to worlds of an author: creating scenes and entire worlds = develops the imagination.

# Materials & Activities Ideas

## ~Preschool through School-Age~

### OUTSIDE

- ☀ Identify, point out, and describe motor skills.
- ☀ Use action words and expressive words.
- ☀ Become involved in a supportive manner.
- ☀ Add materials to encourage exploration and spark interest.
- ☀ Assist with social interactions.
- ☀ Bring "indoor" activities outside!

(adapted from Hohman, 343)



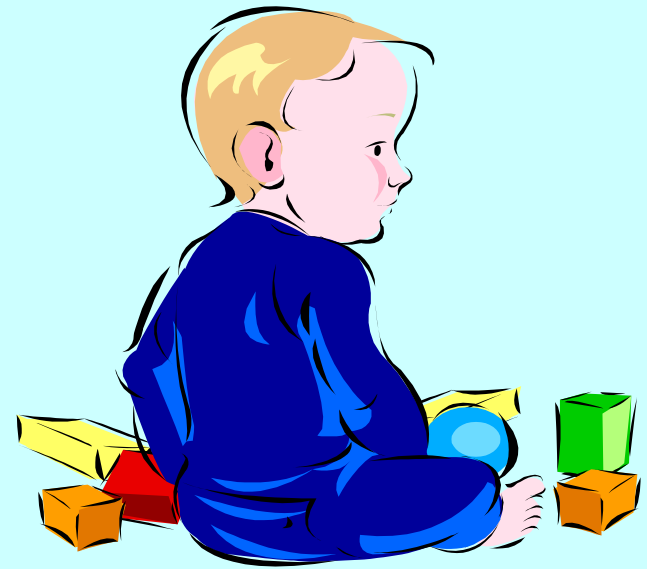
**What other ideas can you add?**

# Part 2 (b): Adult Support & Interactions

*Interactions and experiences are key to literacy development:*

Adults need to:

- & Have appropriate expectations
- & Observe
- & Respond
- & Interact
- & Expand



*Realize that communication in all forms is literacy.*

# Adult Support & Interactions

## During the infant and toddler years:

Adult's interactions with children are particularly important in the development of literacy skills. Ideas include, but are not limited to:

- Use simple language, frequent eye contact, and respond to children's cues and language attempts;
- frequently play with, talk to, sing to, and do finger-plays
- share cardboard books with babies and frequently read to toddlers on the adult's lap or together with one or two other children; and
- provide simple art materials such as crayons, markers, and large paper for toddlers to explore and manipulate.
- Help children learn about their world and express themselves through daily routines
- engage in reciprocal play
- adapt schedules and activities to meet needs

(adapted from Joint Position Statement, 3)

# Adult Support & Interactions

## During the Preschool Years:

Young children need developmentally appropriate experiences and teaching to support literacy learning. These include but are not limited to:

- 👉 positive, nurturing relationships with adults who engage and respond to individual children, model reading and writing behavior, and foster children's interest in and enjoyment of reading and writing;
- 👉 print-rich environments that provide opportunities and tools for children to see and use written language for a variety of purposes, with teachers drawing children's attention to specific letters and words.
- 👉 adults' daily reading of high-quality books to individual children or small groups, including books that positively reflect children's identity, home language, and culture;

(Joint Position Statement, 3-4)

# Adult Support & Interactions

## During the Preschool Years (continued):

- 👉 opportunities for children to talk about what is read and to focus on the sounds and parts of language as well as the meaning;
- 👉 teaching strategies and experiences that develop phonemic (letter-sound) awareness such as songs, finger-plays, games, poems, and stories which contain rhyme, patterns, rhythm, repetition.
- 👉 opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools; firsthand experiences that expand children's vocabulary such as trips, exposure to various tools, objects, and materials.

(Joint Position Statement, 3-4)

# Adult Support & Interactions

## During Kindergarten and Primary Grades:

Continue with many of the same good practices described for younger children and add the following:

- ☞ daily read-aloud and independent reading of meaningful and engaging stories and informational texts;
- ☞ a balanced instructional program that includes systematic code(letter-sound) instruction along with meaningful reading and writing activities;
- ☞ daily opportunities and teacher support to write many kinds of texts for different purposes, including stories, lists, messages, poems, reports, and responses to literature;
- ☞ writing experiences that allow flexibility for use of unconventional forms of writing at first (invented spelling).
- ☞ opportunities to work in small groups and collaboration with others
- ☞ an intellectually engaging and challenging curriculum that expands knowledge of the world and vocabulary, and;
- ☞ adaptation of instructional strategies or more individualized instruction if the child fails to make expected progress in reading or when literacy skills are advanced.

# Adult Support & Interactions

## *~ Ideas for at home and at programs ~*

### Literacy Basics

### Support

#### 1. Exposure to daily living activities:



- ☐ Making lists
- ☐ Reading labels and recipes
- ☐ Observing adults paying bills
- ☐ Going on errands
- ☐ Greeting others
- ☐ Writing in journals
- ☐ Explain and describe what you are doing and what the child is doing.
- ☐ Ask the child questions



# Adult Support & Interactions

## Literacy Basics

## Support

### 2. Provide a print rich environment:



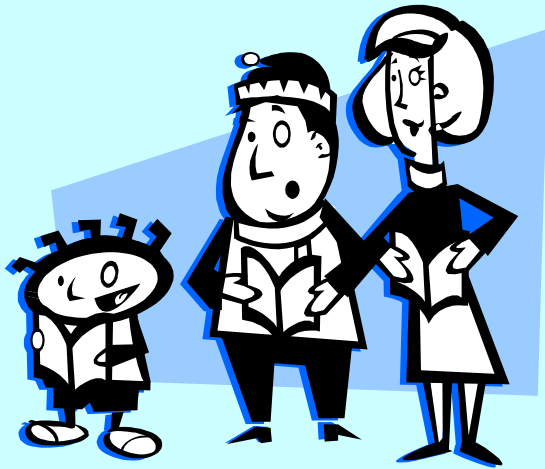
- ☐ Adults read and write for their own purposes
- ☐ Offer frequent story time
- ☐ Encourage dictation experiences
- ☐ Provide high quality literature
- ☐ Offer functional print & labeling in the child's environment.
- ☐ Answer questions about print
- ☐ Introduce words and sounds in creative, playful ways.

# Adult Support & Interactions

## Literacy Basics

## Support

### 3. A rich oral language environment:



- ☐ Adult model language use
- ☐ Adults listen attentively to children and demonstrate interest.
- ☐ Encourage free exploration of oral language; dramatic play roles...
- ☐ Provide experiences for vocabulary enrichment
- ☐ Provide appropriate music with words

# Adult Support & Interactions

## Literacy Basics

## Support

### 3. A rich oral language environment (continued):



- ☐ Promote conversations that the child can understand
- ☐ Provide vocabulary information as requested
- ☐ Ask questions and restate what the child says
- ☐ Play with language
- ☐ Talk about letters and sounds they make in the context of meaningful experiences.

# Adult Support & Interactions

## Literacy Basics

## Support

4. Firsthand experiences of interest:

- ☐ Play
- ☐ Daily living
- ☐ Field trips
- ☐ Nature exploration
- ☐ Entertainment:  
reading newspapers,  
movie lists, TV guides,  
books, and doing crossword  
puzzles.



# Adult Support & Interactions



## Literacy Basics

## Support

5. Symbolic representation experiences:

- ☐ Dramatic play
- ☐ Drawing & painting
- ☐ Music & dance

6. Pressure-free experimentation with writing:

- ☐ Drawing
- ☐ Scribbling
- ☐ Invented spelling

# Adult Support & Interactions

## Literacy Basics

## Support

### 7. Pressure-free exploration of reading

- ☐ Reading from memory
- ☐ Reading with context clues
- ☐ Exposure to books for:
  - \*independent use
  - \*storytelling
  - \*dramatic play
  - \*supplemental activities and expansion with books.

# Adult Support & Interactions



## Literacy Basics

## Support

### 8. Social Skills and Interactions

- ☐ Assist children in working cooperatively with others
- ☐ Respond with interest, listen, and provide experiences for the child to talk about.
- ☐ Provide a warm response to the child
- ☐ Encourage acceptance and understanding of differences.
- ☐ Exposure to books

## Part 3 (a)

# Alphabet Learning



Teaching the alphabet means different things to different people. “Teaching” the alphabet is not the same as alphabet “knowledge.”

*“Alphabet learning is an appropriate goal for preschool and kindergarten children, although certain methods of approaching this learning are not appropriate. ‘Teaching the alphabet’ includes more than helping children learn to distinguish the letters and name them. It also includes helping children know how alphabet letters function in written language.”*

*(Schickendanz, 1999, 144)*



# Alphabet Learning


**The following examples of activities for teaching alphabet knowledge are considered developmentally appropriate:**

- ⌘ Expose children to letters and letter names in the context of their own names, classroom signs, environmental print, titles of stories.
- ⌘ Give opportunities to hear ABC storybooks, play with alphabet letters, puzzles, alphabet-matching games (exposure in their environment - see learning centers and infant & tot ideas)
- ⌘ Children are introduced to words and sounds in creative, playlike ways that promote movement, recall, and develop listening skills.
- ⌘ Sing songs that develop phonemic awareness.
- ⌘ Children learn phonics as they learn whole words.
- ⌘ Children learn to read words that are familiar and present in their environment (naturally).

# Part 3 (b)

## English Language Learners

### ~ELL~



*The number of children whose first language is other than English is increasing daily. Teachers may find that they have several languages represented in their classrooms. How do we support second-language learners?*

- 1) Make a list of all the languages the children in your classroom speak.
- 2) Write down what you know about the culture represented.
- 3) List any other points that you want to know more about.
- 4) Ask yourself why these questions are important.

# English Language Learners

## ~ELL~



*Language develops within a culture and as a means to communicate. Students whose first language is not English progress through predictable stages as they acquire a new language:*

1. First: a silent period as they adjust to a new language
2. Begin to use English for self-help
3. Begin to use English to join in activities
4. Finally, use English to extend learning.

# English Language Learners

## ~ELL~



### Tips for Developing Literacy and English Language Learners:

- ⌘ Provide a comfortable and safe environment; establish a classroom culture in which children feel secure and confident.
- ⌘ Consider the child's ability with English; don't be discouraged if the child doesn't speak it right away.
- ⌘ Provide nonverbal ways for children to communicate.
- ⌘ Explore the family circumstances; build relationships with families.

# English Language Learners

## ~ELL~



### **Tips for Developing Literacy and English Language Learners:**

- ⌘ Observe English use on the playground, in centers, and when interacting with English-speaking children.
- ⌘ Establish literacy routines, for example, create monthly calendars, have children sign in.
- ⌘ Provide time for children to talk.
- ⌘ Establish daily story time (concept books, predictable text).
- ⌘ Use language experience as a strategy (reinforce, repeat, clarify)
- ⌘ Provide thematic instruction in the classroom (long-term projects)
- ⌘ Teach skills in the context of purposeful, meaningful communication.
- ⌘ Provide an array of resources for children.
- ⌘ Pair ELL children with English-speaking children.
- ⌘ Demonstrate to children that you value their home language.
- ⌘ Mirror back to children what they have said and expand on their words.

(“Stepping Into Literacy,” 64-65)

# Part 3 (c): Professional Development

1. What have you learned?
2. What are your goals?
4. What do you need to do to achieve your goal?

Begin a professional portfolio and include:

- ❁ An overview of literacy development,
- ❁ A description of classroom literacy activity ideas,
- ❁ Reflections from readings, discussions, and work,
- ❁ Copies of articles that pertain to development and literacy,
- ❁ Available training.
- ❁ Resources for families

# And that's not all...



It doesn't stop here...


II Training opportunities - Call your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency

II Resources - start reading! See attached.

II Other ideas...

# Part 3(d)

## RESOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY



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- ⌘ Scholastic Early Childhood Today (Oct. 2001). *Learning to Read: The Role of Emotions and Play* by Greenspan, S., and Leong, D.
- ⌘ Scholastic Early Childhood Today (Jan. 2000). *Nurturing Literacy*. Neuman, S.B.

### Websites:

Book a Minute: <http://www.rinkworks.com/bookaminute/>  
Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site:  
<http://www.carolhurst.com/index.html>.

## RESOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Websites:

Center for the Study of Books in Spanish: [222.csusm.edu/csb/](http://222.csusm.edu/csb/)

Children's Book Council: <http://www.cbcbooks.org>

Children's Literature Web Guide: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown>

Database of Award Winning Children's Literature:

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/cyberguide.html>.

Internet Public Library: <http://www.ipl.org/youth>

Multicultural Children's Books:

<http://childrensbooks.about.com/parenting.chi>

Woods Multicultural Book List: <http://www.unl.edu/lib.init.list/bklist.ac.html>.

Literacy: <http://www.nncc.org/Literacy/literacy.page.html>

Association for library services to children:

[www.asc.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html](http://www.asc.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html).

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Children's Literacy: [www.child2000.org/lit-tips.htm](http://www.child2000.org/lit-tips.htm)

National Institute for Literacy: <http://novel.nifl.gov/>

Parent Involvement: [www.indiana.edu/~leric-rec/ieo/digests/d89.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~leric-rec/ieo/digests/d89.html)

School-Age Literacy Information:

<http://curriculum.becta.org.uk/Lteracy/index.html>.

Speech and Language Delays: <http://www.kidsource.com/ASHA/>